

RECOGNIZING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF PRAMILA JAYAPAL

**HON. ADAM SMITH**

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 1, 2012*

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the accomplishments of Pramila Jayapal, founder of the Hate Free Zone, now called OneAmerica. For more than a decade she has worked tirelessly to ensure that people from immigrant communities have a voice in America. Her efforts have made Washington State and our Nation a better place for all people who call it home.

In the days immediately following the attacks of September 11, 2001, Pramila began the Hate Free Zone Campaign of Washington as an entirely volunteer-run organization to combat discrimination against immigrants, especially from communities of color—primarily Muslim, Arab American, East African and South Asian—and to work against stereotypes in a post 9/11 world. At first, the mission was to advocate for the rights of those who were likely to be victims of hate crimes.

Soon after, Pramila began to shift the focus of the Hate Free Zone towards identifying and addressing violations of the rights and civil liberties of immigrants. Through these efforts, she began working with community leaders and elected officials to address these concerns on local, State, and Federal levels.

In 2008, the Hate Free Zone became OneAmerica: With Justice for All, reflecting the mission of advocating for the fundamental principles of democracy and justice by giving voices to all immigrant communities. Today, OneAmerica works with allies and community leaders to educate, engage and advocate, and has become an active and trusted immigrant advocacy organization in Washington State.

Pramila's dedication to the protection of civil rights and civil liberties is important to every single group of Americans, immigrants and non-immigrants alike. The promotion of civic education, voting rights and civil liberties benefits everyone who calls the United States home.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I honor Pramila Jayapal and all of her work at OneAmerica. Though she is moving on from OneAmerica, I have no doubt she will continue to advocate for those in need. Her dedication to improving the lives of all persons living in Washington State has been an inspiration to us all, and I look forward to her next endeavors.

RECOGNIZING THE 2012 GREEN COMMUNITY AWARD WINNERS

**HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 1, 2012*

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the winners of the 2012 Green Community Awards.

Every year the Green Guiding Committee of Prince William County awards people or orga-

nizations for their work towards bettering the community and sustaining the environment. Each of this year's winners has tackled an issue in their immediate area that presents a larger environmental problem. The Green Awards are the highest honor given for environmental service in Prince William County, and this year's winners exemplify the qualities and work ethic that are required to keep our community green.

I extend my personal congratulations to:

Stonewall Jackson High School Ecology Club—for raising awareness about environmental issues, inspiring fellow students to get involved, hosting events for younger students and taking the lead on conservation projects in the field.

Prince William Trails and Streams Coalition—for their ongoing efforts, projects and programs to create, restore, clean and preserve trails and access to natural areas for the entire community.

Friends of the Occoquan—for their ongoing fall and spring projects to clean up the Occoquan River in Prince William County for the past 13 years.

Vulcan Materials—Manassas Quarry—for their corporate practices to conserve resources and reduce waste, plus their efforts to support schools and organization in their efforts to protect the environment.

The Taylor Family of Windy Knoll Farm—for their generous offer to allow local conservation groups to host programs and demonstrations on the farm, as well as their use of sound and environmentally wise management practices.

Eric VanNortwick—for his ongoing efforts to clean up, maintain and enhance trails along Neabsco Creek in Prince William County.

Ed Dandar—for his dedication in coordinating and overseeing logistics for the 26 mile clean up along the Occoquan River.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in commending the winners of the 2012 Green Community Awards and in thanking them for their dedication to our community.

ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2013

SPEECH OF

**HON. GENE GREEN**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 31, 2012*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 5325) making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2013, and for other purposes:

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Chair, I am concerned about the Energy and Water Appropriations bill for several reasons. One of these reasons is that while this bill increases funding for the Army Corps of Engineers over the President's request, it is not enough. The Army Corps completes critical flood control projects and also, through dredging at our port, fuels a major economic engine in Harris County, Texas and has been underfunded for years.

Additionally, by cutting New Starts completely, this bill prevents funding for a vital project in Houston that will explore widening and deepening the shipping channel to the Turning Basin. This funding is critical to preparing our Port for the years ahead.

The Port of Houston is the largest foreign tonnage port and the largest petrochemical port in the country. In fact, it moves the second largest amount of cargo in the country, as 8.5 percent of our nation's cargo moves through the Port of Houston. The commerce that occurs at our port is critical to our Nation's energy and chemical sectors and to our country's ability to trade and move goods throughout our country. It is a port of national significance, but has not received the attention that is necessary to answer the challenges we face in the near future. Despite the national importance of our port, it is facing a dredging crisis.

In 1998, the Federal Government and the Port of Houston invested \$700 million over the course of years, to deepen and widen the Ship Channel. An investment we have benefitted from tremendously.

As the years have passed silt has settled and reduced the draft in the channel significantly. Today, only .4 percent of the channel is dredged to its proper depth across the entire width of the channel. That is astounding. Our Nation's investment is rapidly deteriorating.

Currently, the Houston Ship Channel is dredged to a depth of 43 feet, but it should be 45 feet. The Panama Canal is expanding and when it is completed, the Port of Houston should be at a minimum of 45 feet and we could take advantage of additional depth.

In the most recent President's budget request, the Administration asked for \$700,000 in new dredging money and new start funding of \$100,000 toward study on the widening and deepening of the Houston Ship Channel to the Turning Basin. The new start funding is particularly important, once a project gets new start money it is more likely to be funded in the future. Unfortunately, in the bill we are considering today, the funding for the new start will be eliminated.

This increased funding level for dredging just over \$24 million, which is maintained in the Energy and Water Appropriations bill, is welcome and I am pleased that Congress and the Administration are committing more resources to our maintenance dredging needs, particularly in a budget environment when most programs are cut. However, it's about a third of the total needed to bring our channel back to its authorized depth. The reduced draft costs our region money.

As we confront the dual challenges of adopting policies that create jobs and reduce the debt, funding for dredging projects is an item that, while costly, will have more of a positive impact on our economy than a negative impact on our deficit. The Texas Transportation Institute performed a study and determined that a direct economic impact of the loss of 1 foot of draft is \$373 million. The majority of this impact is lost business opportunities due to light loading of non-containerized vessels. If the dredging crisis at the port continues to worsen, this cost will quickly increase.